

Comberton Scrapbook 1897-1990 by Mike Petty

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Introduction

Each evening between March 1997 and March 2015 I compiled a 'Looking Back' column in the Cambridge News in which I featured snippets from issues of 100, 75, 50 and 25 years ago.

I particularly sought out unusual items relating to villages and areas of Cambridge not usually featured

These stories are now available for you to read, search and download from the *Internet Archive* website, search 'Mike Petty' and 'Looking Back'

I am currently working to complete the few remaining years until I have covered a full century

These snippets are arranged by the date they appeared in the Cambridge Daily News or Cambridge Independent Press.

I can supply actual copies of many of these articles – please contact me.

The newspapers are held in the Cambridgeshire Collection at Cambridge Lion Yard Library together with other Cambridge titles back to 1762. They have a variety of indexes including a record of stories for every village in Cambridgeshire between 1770-1900 and newspaper cuttings files on 750 topics from 1958 to date.

I initiated much of the indexing and have many indexes of my own. Please feel free to contact me for advice and assistance.

For more details of newspapers and other sources for Cambridgeshire history see my website www.mikepetty.org.uk

This index was produced as a working part of my personal research resources and would benefit by editing. If you can make any of it work for you I am delighted. But remember you should always check everything!

Please make what use of it you may. Please remember who it came from

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Comberton Scrapbook

1898 12 06

Two boys aged eight and nine were charged with unlawfully placing upon the L.& W N railway two trolley wheels and an axle with intent to obstruct a train at Little Eversden. Daniel Garner, driver of the engine from Cambridge to Bletchley, stated that after passing Lord's Bridge station he saw them on the line in front of him. He shut off the steam and applied the brake, but could not stop in time, and the trolley wheels were smashed to pieces. They were an odd pair of wheels, out of use, and were lying beside the line. The vicar of Comberton gave the boys a good character. They were bound over and cautioned not to go on to the line to play again

1900 10 22

Properties at Dry Drayton and Comberton were submitted to public auction. The first lot consisted of the freehold licensed premises at Drayton known by the sign of the Queen's Head and three cottages in the rear. It was knocked down to Fenstanton brewery for £320. They also became the purchasers of an acre of land at Comberton at a price of £52 10s.

1906 03 10

County licences – Blue Boar Grantchester, King William Willingham, Plough Comberton,
06 03 10a

1906 06 30

Fourteen public houses have been closed under the Licensing Act of 1904. They include a beer house at Heath Road Litlington, which sold one barrel a week, including stout, and a gallon of ginger wine. All their beer was made from pure malt and hops and it was a better house than the two nearest to it. There were four fully-licensed houses, four beer houses and one off-licence in the village. The Dolphin at Stapleford had been shut up for six weeks as the former landlord had run away and the village appeared to do well without it. The present tenant was a cycle agent and taxidermist as well, 'So you stuff people first and put them on wheels afterwards?' also Cambridge: Jolly Butchers, Star, Sun; Bassingbourn: Crown; Bottisham: Plough; Comberton: Plough; Fordham: Six Bells, Landbeach: Red Cow; Lt Shelford: Carrier's Cart; Stapleford: Dolphin; Steeple Morden: beer house; Waterbeach: Haunch of Mutton, Plough and Horses; Willingham: William IV, Rose and Crown
06 06 30d,e, f

1906 07 28

Robert Reed told the court he'd hired a piano organ from Antonio Dermaco of Gas Lane, Cambridge, piano organ proprietor, and went out in company of a man named Fuller. They visited the Plough, Comberton leaving it outside. He returned after five minutes to find the organ had disappeared – it had been thrown into the village pond. He got it out and tried to play it, but it did not work and had to be repaired in London. A Comberton carpenter and butcher were seen moving it, but claimed they had left it at the White Horse. 06 07 28

1906 11 16

The Compensation Authority considered claims for premises closed under the Licensing Act. They included a beerhouse at North Brook End, Steeple Morden, The Plough at Comberton, the Red Cow, Landbeach and Carrier's Cart at Lt Shelford. Potton Brewery said they would lose £275 if the licence of a beerhouse at Heath Road, Litlington was taken away but accepted £240 as compensation. However Benskin's Watford Brewery refused £251 for the Sun in Newmarket Road, Cambridge. also Stapleford Dolphin, Waterbeach Haunch of Mutton & Plough & Horses, Sawston – Flower Pot, Willingham – King William IV, Bottisham Plough, Soham Queen's Arms and Old Brewery 06 11 16a & b

1910 03 18

Licensing meeting – Over Sow & Pig, Willingham Black Horse, Chesterton White Horse, Comberton Red Lion, Cottenham Boot, Longstanton Red Cow, Milton Three Tuns, Shelford Three Tuns 10 03 18b

1911 02 24

The ideas governing military manoeuvres are generally very practical and prosaic, if a trifle far-fetched. But those of the University Officers Training Corps are often diverting. General Stummakoffski had received a wound from the lance of one of his troops which prevented him sitting in the saddle and was forced to continue his flight in a litter, trying to reach Comberton. Firing was carried out at murderously short range and had ball cartridges been used they would have put enough bullets into the litter to have considerably alarmed 'The General' to say the least! 11 02 24c

1913 08 22 CIP

Great Chesterford Brewery comprising the steam brewery, two maltings and seven licensed houses were sold by auction. Lots included the Plough at Birdbrook, the Five Bells in Saffron Walden, the King William IV beerhouse and Queen's Head Inn, Balsham, Comberton's Tailors Arms with cottage, which fetched £730 and the Plough beerhouse in Chesterford. The Brewery itself with a malting beerhouse raised £2,700 with the plant to be paid by valuation.

1914 01 30

Comberton new reading room opened – 14 01 30g

1914 07 03

Lightning strikes houses Histon, St Ives, Kingston, Toft, Comberton, Wimpole, Elsworth

1914 08 14

Comberton housing

1914 09 11

Enlistment – Lolworth, Boxworth, Over, Bourn, Linton, Cottenham, Elsworth, Swavesey, Bottisham, Longstanton, Sawston, Comberton, Waterbeach

1914 11 06

Belgians – Littleport, Burwell, Chatteris, Duxford, Comberton, Sawston, Elsworth, Fen Drayton, Swavesey, Fordham, West Wickham, Wicken, Gamlingay, Willingham, Madingley, Isleham, Landbeach, Linton, Lode, Oakington,

1914 11 13

Working class homes, Newton & Comberton

1916 07 12

Golden Wedding. The following appeared in the "Sydney Morning Herald" (N.S.W.) on May 2; "Golden Wedding. — Preston-Looker. May 1, 1886, at St Mary's, Comberton, Cambridgeshire, England, by the Rev. Drew; Harvey Preston of Cambridge, England, to Lydia, third daughter of the late Mr. Edward Looker, Manor Farm, Comberton. Present address, Airlie, Herbert Street, Summer Hill."

1918 03 06

County licensing – Tailor's Arms Comberton, Garden Gate at Histon, Horseshoe Fen Drayton, Swan with Two Necks Swavesey, Harvest Home Oakington referred – 18 03 06b, c

1916 06 04

Parents' loss third son in war— The sympathy of the whole village (Comberton) goes out to Mr. and Mrs. David Day in the sad loss of their son, Pte Henry John Day, of the 3rd North Staffordshire Regt at the Curragh Camp (Ireland) after a brief illness. Pte Day joined the Army at the age of 18, and after several months' fighting in France was taken prisoner by the Germans. As a prisoner he endured great hardship, which greatly undermined his health. Two of his brothers, were killed in action in July, 1918. 19 06 04

1920 08 11

Football - The annual meeting of the Histon and District Football League was held in the Histon Institute on Wednesday evening. Mr. L. R. Neaves, of Coton, occupied the chair, and was supported by the hon. secretary of the League (Mr. J. Harold Peck), and there were representatives from the following clubs: Willingham, Cottenham North End, Milton, Comberton, Histon Institute, Girton, Oakington, Cottenham, Horningsea and Coton. Apology for non-attendance was received from Over Hotspurs. Mr. John Chivers was re-elected president of the League, and the following vice-presidents were also elected, subject to their consent: Dr. J. M. King (Willingham), Mr. Arthur Rhodes (Histon), the Rev S. T. Adams (Cambridge). Dr. Balsam (Girton). Mr. F. H. Keats (Milton), Mr. T. F. Essex (Milton), Mr. Thomas Ivatt (Cottenham), the Rev. W C. Cooke, R.D, and the Rev. R. Smith (Histon), Mr. Philip Papworth (Oakington), Mr. John Papworth (Landbeach), the Hon. E. S. Montagu, M.P. Mr. G. Rogers (Comberton), Mr. Gordon Baker (Girton), Dr. Ellis (Cottenham), Mr. B. W. Silk (Coton), and Rev. David Oliver (Over). Mr. A. T. Rogers was re-elected hon. treasurer and Mr. J. Peck auditor. Mr. J. Harold Peck was re-elected hon. secretary, and Mr. L. B. Neaves (Coton) chairman of the council. The secretary's report, which was very satisfactory, was presented by Mr. J. H. Peck. Over Hotspurs were the winners of the cup, with Coton runners-up. The treasurer's report was also presented, and showed a satisfactory balance in hand. Various alterations were made to the rules of the League and it was decided this year to present twelve medals instead of eleven as heretofore. The entrance fee to clubs this season is 10s. Entries close September 1.

1922 03 13

The County licencing meeting were told the White Horse Comberton was a fully-licenced house, the owners being the Star Brewery, Cambridge. The licensee had two children and also did other work as a canvasser for a window cleaning company. The annual rent was £5.00. The accommodation consisted of one tap-room - which was also used as a living room for the family, a parlour, a billiard room, a small bar, a cellar and four bedrooms. The landlord had suggested the house might conveniently be made into two cottages. There was no public lavatory accommodation. The trade of the White Horse for 1921 had been 46½ barrels and 37½ gallons of spirits. It was 106 paces from the Tailors Arms another fully-licenced and much better constructed house; there were at present three fully-licenced and one beer house in the village giving an average of 109 people to each licenced house.

1922 04 19

Comberton village play, p3

1922 06 22

The report of Chesterton R.D.C. Housing Committee showed numerous applications had been received for a reduction in rent of the Council houses. After discussion it was decided that the rent should be £20 per annum where the total income was 50 shillings a week or over, and £17 per annum when the income was less. The Architect reported that the final accounts for the erection of 36 houses in Comberton, Haslingfield, Horningsea, Lt Shelford and Willingham had been sanctioned by the Ministry

1922 10 21

Comberton need recreation ground, p6

1923 02 02

A fire which might have assumed much more alarming proportions but for the efforts of the villagers and the promptness of the Cambridge Borough Fire Brigade, broke out in a stack at Red Brick Farm, Hardwick. The fire was noticed about 2 o'clock on Thursday afternoon and a messenger was sent to Comberton Post Office and the Brigade received the call from there at 2.58. When the messenger returned to Hardwick he found the tender in charge of Sergt Claugue already on the spot having covered the distance of about six miles within 12 minutes of receiving the call

1924 01 10

Mr Hobson said the present state of houses in Comberton was deplorable. There were people living in two rooms, married couples with grown up sons and daughters practically herded together like sheep in a fold. It was not the better class of home that was required but the house suitable for a working man. It was not necessary to select the most expensive sites, right in the centre of the village, from where a labouring man often had to walk two miles to work

1925 02 28

Comberton institute, p5*

1925 03 02 c

Shrove Tuesday was something of a gala day for the people of Comberton with the opening of the billiard room. This new building is capacious, comfortable, bright and airy. Although it directly adjoins the main body of the Village Institute it is sufficiently secluded to ensure quietness. The opening as performed by Lady Blenkinsop who said Comberton was the most progress village in the county. Having declared the room open she took a cue and made the first stroke with it 1925 04 11 About 120 members of the 1st Cambridgeshire Regiment are spending the Easter weekend under canvas at Madingley. The Cambridge-St Neots road acted as part of the front line of a British force which was endeavouring to repel an invader marching on London. The Norfolk Brigade was ordered to take up position from Oakington to Comberton. The work was carried out under service conditions & proved exceptionally difficult on account of the wooded nature of the country in front

1925 06 03

The chairman of Comberton parish council said that since 1919 they had been without a recreation ground in the central part of the village. Previous to that year a meadow was hired annually at a rental of £7. This sum was paid by the amount received for the herbage on the old pleasure ground situate on the boundary of the parish. This had never been used for recreation purposes and was useless. The parish council now wished to sell it and devote the proceeds of the sale towards the purchase of a new recreation ground at Pennie's Close, but the owner refused to negotiate. They sought compulsory powers for its acquisition.

1925 07 03

Comberton fair, p5

1926 02 19

Comberton Institute, p6

1927 03 30

Comberton, which made itself laugh very heartily over a mock trial two years ago, staged a similar piece of amusing make-believe when the village institute put on the dignity of a "police court" and the Vicar sat in judicial pomp over the hearing of a sensational burglary case involving the theft of a pearl necklace. The "prisoner", who described himself as "a bit of a farmer and a bit of a dealer, said he was in the habit of collecting eggs by aeroplane. He admitted having a drink at Eversden – "such a slow place" - and admiring the barmaid. He was discharged and advised in future to keep clear of bars and barmaids

1928 01 16

At day-break a four-roomed house at West Street Comberton suddenly collapsed while the occupants and their three small children were still in their beds. Both the upper and lower rooms at the north end, where they were sleeping, completely collapsed. One of the beds was precipitated partly into an adjoining yard and two of the ceiling joists fell heavily right between the two elder children sleeping in their beds. That they all escaped serious injury is a miracle. The greater part of the furniture was subsequently got out by willing helpers. Hundreds of people came and viewed the damage during Sunday.

1928 02 04

The tea given to old folks at the Comberton Institute was one of the pleasantest and most enjoyable functions ever held in the village. About 80 persons responded to the invitations. The long rows of tables had been arranged by the lady members and a plentiful supply of flowers and plants added to the cheerful scene. Many of those present were over 80 years old, the oldest being Mrs Ann Marshall who is 88. After a sumptuous repast the tables were cleared for dancing and tobacco freely distributed for the men and oranges for the ladies. William Huckle, who is 83, gave a step-dance with the vitality of a youth of 18.

1928 02 22

Comberton Institute, p8

1929 05 16

Comberton college collapse, p8

1931 06 12

It was a very gentle earthquake in Cambridge: suddenly in the silence of a calm and tranquil night there came a mysterious, slow, oscillatory motion, quickening and increasing in intensity. It seemed as if a giant hand had seized the bed and was shaking it, gently but with irresistible might. A washstand was overturned at Comberton but houses were rocked at Ely where some of the foundations were heard to crack. At St Ives people sought refuge on the Market Hill and could not be induced to return to bed. 31 06 12c & d & e

1933 06 27

Comberton parish council took compulsory powers in 1927 and purchased a suitable field of easy access from all parts of the village with some fine oak trees at one end. During the past five years money has been raised to meet the cost of hedging, levelling and erecting swings, but there still remained the laying down of tennis courts, a bowling green and a cricket pitch. Now a grant has been received which will enable this to be completed. 33 06 27

1933 06 28

Impington sewage, Comberton pond – 33 06 28

1939 07 28

Comberton straw stacks in field opposite church destroyed by fire – 39 07 28a

1940 04 02

Comberton soldier killed on sentry duty by backing lorry – 40 04 02a

1940 04 05 CIPof

Farm Blaze. Prompt work by farmhands with pails of water and the speedy arrival of the Fire Brigade saved what would almost certainly have been a serious fire at Westfield Farm, Comberton, on Monday. The outbreak occurred in a stockyard, where a quantity of straw and litter became ignited. A strong wind fanned the flames, but several employees and others threw pail after pail of water on them until the brigade arrived. With two deliveries from a pond nearby, the worst of the outbreak was soon quelled. Most of the fowls and pigs, which were kept in sheds in the yard, were

removed to safety. The farm is owned by the Cambridgeshire County Council and tenanted by Mr. Eric Pryor.

1940 06 14

Dunkirk Experiences. The village has accorded a warm welcome to Pte. Ernest Marshall, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Marshall, of Barton Road, Comberton, who returned home during this week for a few days' leave after a thrilling experience during the withdrawal of the troops from Dunkirk.

Relating his experiences, Pte. Marshall said they were about five miles from Dunkirk when orders were received to make for the coast, and to take to the boats as they became available. Reaching the coast at daybreak, they waded in the water up to their armpits in a vain attempt to board a boat, but every boat was already filled to its utmost capacity. Still undismayed, although shells were bursting continuously around them, they decided to return to the shore, and make their way along the coast in the direction of Dunkirk. That five-mile journey Pte. Marshall described as one of living torture. Numerous bombers were hovering overhead, dropping their deadly bombs around them, and heavy shellfire added to their discomfort. By lying flat on the ground and snatching every effort to proceed during a brief lull in the attack, he and his comrades, after seven long hours, eventually reached Dunkirk, where they boarded a boat, which, in spite of heavy enemy attack, landed them safely in England.

1941 10 03

40 years sub-postmaster.—After nearly 40 years of efficient service as sub-postmaster at Comberton, Mr, Louis Baker relinquished the office on Tuesday last. At present no one has been appointed to fill the vacancy.

1944 09 29

Vicar's departure.—The resignation of the Rev. E. W. Buswell, who has been Vicar of Comberton for the past 12 years, will become effective on September 30, and he anticipates beginning his new duties at Chesterfield next week

1944 11 10

21st Birthday party. The Haslingfield Women's Institute celebrated its 21st anniversary with a birthday party on November 7. Each member was invited to bring along a friend, and the President welcomed ten members of Comberton W.I. A card of greeting and congratulations was received from Lady Denman. A varied programme of games, competitions and sketches was arranged by the entertainments committee.

1945 05 11

Stack Fires. On Tuesday the N.F.S. were called out to deal with numerous stack fires outside Cambridge, mainly caused by VE-Day celebrations. The areas affected were Bourn, Toft, Gransden, Linton, Foxton, Wrestlingworth and Comberton. In some villages watch was kept by the N.F.S. to prevent the fires from spreading

1947 07 31

At the meeting of the Chesterton Rural District Council it was reported that a further three parishes (Coton, Fen Drayton and Lolworth) had been supplied with water mains. It was anticipated that the work involving the supply to Barton, Comberton, Toft, Haslingfield and Harlton would be put in hand during the coming year. Several parishes, notably Croxton, Eltisley, Graveley, Hardwick and Dry Drayton were extremely short of water for domestic and stock purposes and trouble was anticipated in the summer months. The position could not be improved until a new high level water tower was erected thereby affording sufficient pressure to enable a mains supply to be taken to these villages.

1950 02 29

Chesterton RDC have decided to make a compulsory purchase order for the acquisition of land at Comberton for housing. They relied on the parish council in choosing the land. It was the only site in

the village likely to be available for housing. It was five or six acres in area and had a frontage of 300 feet. The site would need "a lot of work".

1950 08 31

The post office proposes to introduce the 999 scheme for emergency calls as from today at exchanges in the areas of Bottisham, Comberton, Cottenham, Elsworth, Shelford, Haddenham & Waterbeach. The system enables a caller by dialling 999 instead of 0 to secure the special attention of the exchange operator for emergency calls. Special equipment has been installed at the exchange so that when 999 is dialled an emergency lamp and loud buzzer will indicate to the operator that the call is especially urgent.

1950 11 23

A young taxi proprietor and motor mechanic of Barton Road, Comberton, argued his right to erect two petrol pumps in front of his bungalow. He told a planning inspector the house had been built about 1937 and was previously used as a post office and later for a taxi hire service. The petrol pumps would enable him to make a better living. The road past his house was a fairly busy one and with the custom of farmers he hoped to be able to sell 200 to 400 gallons a week.

1951 12 12

Is an electric washing machine an essential in the educational development of children? The County Primary Education committee sought approval that machines should be hired from the Eastern Electricity Board at three guineas a time for the use of schools at Bassingbourn, Comberton and Swavesey. Councillors were equally divided. How many people were in an income bracket to afford a washing machine? Not many. The only way you can buy them after you have learned to use them is by the hire purchase system that people can ill-afford. It was approved on the casting vote of the chairman.

1955 02 16

A Vampire jet aircraft on a training flight from Oakington crashed and exploded at Comberton, killing the pilot. Flaming twisted mangled parts of the plane carpeted a 500 yards radius, a bullock was badly injured and chickens were killed. A car was badly damaged. Pieces of the plane wreckage went through the roof of the kitchen of Fox's bridge Farmhouse where the farmer's wife was working. She described the noise as a 'terrific tornado' and flung herself down for safety. She tried to dial 999 but the telephone wires had been cut by the crashing aircraft. 55 02 16a

1955 02 18a

Comberton crash inquiry

1955 07 12

Just as hundreds of Cambridge office workers were about to leave for home down came the rain in one of the most unusual thunderstorms. Only parts of the city were affected, in others there was mild drizzle. At Coton lightning struck a transformer under which an eight-year-old lad had been playing, close by a television aerial was struck and split to pieces setting the tv on fire and at Comberton the chimney stack of a house was struck, causing serious damage to the roof. 55 07 12

1955 12 14

The petrol station of today fills the place held by the blacksmith 50 years ago argued the company appealed to put up a petrol service station opposite the White Hart public house, Cambridge Road, Barton. It was of the utmost importance but small villages could not always afford to have one of their own. But the parish council objected and the County said it was the wrong place; Haslingfield or Comberton would be better sites. 55 12 14

1957 04 26

Five oak trees standing on Comberton recreation ground have become the major topic of conversation in the village and have led to the retirement of one long-standing parish councillor. The suggestion

that three of them should be cut down because they are unsafe had aroused a storm of controversy. A 'Save the Trees' petition, signed by 200 villagers was sent to the Parish Council, who turned it down. 57 04 26d

1957 04 30

Three oak trees standing in Comberton recreation ground will be felled as they have been infected with rot and could blow over. Timber merchants have offered a reasonable sum for the trees as they now stood. If they were left to deteriorate they would become a dead loss. One of the trees is probably 300 years old but the wood could have another 300 years of useful life as timber in a church or college. 57 04 30b

1957 08 28

All over the country the Women's Institutes are busily recording the history of their villages, questioning old residents and collecting old deeds, photographs and paintings. Documents found in a fireplace recess in a Comberton cottage include an invitation to a 'farriers feast' at Bassingbourn and a horse doctor's bill. They were lent to a Cambridge personality with the intention that they reach the Folk Museum, but were somehow mislaid. 57 08 28

1960 11 07

Comberton Village College was officially opened by Henry Morris who had retired as Chief Education Officer in 1954. The buildings, particularly the hall, workshops and other practical rooms have been equipped so they may be used by young people and adults in the evenings and at weekends. It provides facilities for the countryman as good as those offered in towns and cities and they are packed each evening. The college library, in addition to serving the school, is also a branch of the county library. 60 11 07

1960 12 16

Throughout the year the CIP carried a series of feature articles relating to Cambridgeshire villages. They are Comberton

1961 08 02

A Comberton firm, Bast Glazing Clips, is manufacturing an entirely new type of glasshouse made of aluminium in which glass is held in place with a spring clip and not the usual putty. These new glazing clips were designed in 1946 and patented. In 1959 the company exhibited the first prototype alloy glasshouse at a Paris show. These have only been available to the trade but now a domestic model is being made which the buyer can assemble for himself in a short time. 61 08 02

1962 02 16

When Miss I.G. Long was asked to start a Wolf Cub pack she did not know anything about the movement. But armed with the Jungle Book, on which the clubs are based, she formed a pack in the parish of St Barnabas and boys came from as far away as Comberton and Abington. That was in 1930, the same year as the St John's pack began under the leadership of Miss F.E. Isaacson. Both ladies are still working for the cubs 62 02 16

1962 09 26

The new register of buildings of 'special architectural or historic interest' features houses, pubs and even mile stones. The Ministry thinks most of the parish churches are worth maintaining as are some village halls and windmills. The list includes a dovecote in Church Street, Comberton, The Three Tuns pub at Fen Drayton – once the Old Guildhall, Chiver's windmill at Impington, the obelisk at St Margaret's Mount, Harston and a statue in the grounds of Fulbourn Manor 62 09 26a

1963 03 09

Cuts in the education budget means that the primary school buildings programme has been badly hit; the Ministry has agreed to only one new school at Coton, replacing a two-classroom village school. Proposals for schools at Comberton and Fen Drayton have been rejected. 63 03 09

1964 04 24

Comberton school – parents complain about standard of education, photo – 64 04 24

1964 09 11

Comberton photo feature – 64 09 11b

1964 10 13

Parents are keeping their children away from Comberton primary school because of inadequate heating in the classrooms. The old solid fuel stoves have been removed but replacement electric heaters have not been connected. Children sit huddled in one classroom wearing thick winter coats warmed only by drip-fed oil heaters. One teacher took her class to her own home because of the cold. The County Education Officer says the heating will be switched on tomorrow and there was nothing for parents to make a fuss about. 64 10 13

1972 04 12

Comberton Youth Centre, p4

1972 10 12

Comberton's village pond has dried up. And the famous group of wild mallard which live there have flown away. The pond has dried entirely only for a week in the driest of summers before. This time it has been dry for three months. The chairman of the Parish Council, Mr William Watts, suggests that trench-digging around the village to install main drainage, has stopped up the flow of surface water into the pond. He said "We are worried about the situation but we'll wait until there has been a real good fall of rain to see what happens before we actually do anything about the lack of water. If the water does not run into the pond then, we might have to consider sinking a well or something. The village pond is a real amenity"

1972 12 06

There was a bit of a flap in Comberton this summer when the village ducks took to the wing and flew away. The village pond had dried up. The ducks came back when the autumn rains began and the pond started to fill up again. This week the Army came to the rescue. The officers and men of the Royal Engineers, based at Waterbeach, decided that a spot of pond digging would be good training for their excavator operators and on Monday the job of lifting several tons of slime and silt began. An army spokesman said "We have a number of families living in the village and we decided it would be neighbourly and help us at the same time"

1973 12 14

Comberton parents back to school, p9

1974 11 21

The salt pot has disappeared from the dining tables of Cambridgeshire schools. Now school children can only help themselves to salt under the watchful eye of a supervisor. The rationing follows big cuts in the deliveries of table salts to schools. During some weeks they are getting none at all. Ten-year-old Michelle Williams of Hardwick made sure of her salt supply by taking her own to her school at Comberton

1976 06 19

Cambridge's newest language school, the Newnham Language Centre, was officially opened at a reception. It is the brainchild of Mr Michael Short who was adult tutor at Comberton Village College for ten years. Students pay £70 for a four-week vacation course or £165 for a ten-week term and stay with Cambridge families. Tours to colleges and local country houses are arranged. It aims to provide facilities for small groups to learn the language in really attractive surroundings.

1977 01 11

Molly Dancing, a special Cambridgeshire Plough Monday celebration which died out in the 1930s, has made a comeback at Balsham. The Cambridge Morris Men revived the custom as part of the ritual of taking an oak plough round the village. About £1,000 has been raised for charity since Plough Monday was revived seven years ago but for once the "Ploughmen" in breeches and waistcoats, jocularly threatening to carve up lawns unless given money, were upstaged by the enterprise of the Morris Men. Mr Russell Wortley said the costumes were as authentic and possible and the tunes were recorded from an elderly Morris dancer at Comberton who died many years ago. It was the first time they had been danced since the tradition died out at Little Downham in 1936.

1978 05 11

Comberton plane crash, p1

1981 01 09

There is a tinge of sadness about the Plough Monday celebrations this year. Russell Wortley, who did so much to restore the custom and was instrumental in bringing back the Molly Dancers, died last January while Molly Dancing at Comberton. But he left a permanent record in notes and articles which have now been published by the Cambridge Morris Men. 81 01 09b

1981 02 16

Comberton Youth Centre's disco team, winners of a national championship, will appear before Prince and Princes Michael of Kent at a televised awards ceremony. But the BBC has asked for their sexy routine to be toned down. The girls black stockings and cami-knickers will be substituted for something less revealing and the boy's hairy chest covered up. They will also change their name from 'Scandal' to 'The Bodywork Company'. 81 02 16 & a

1983 06 10

Comberton Community College, p21

1984 03 31

Education Secretary, Sir Keith Joseph, chatted with pupils in their classrooms when he visited Comberton Village College on hush-hush trip. No advance publicity had been given to avoid demonstrators turning up. Sir Keith started his visit by having mince and vegetables for lunch. He sat next to 12-year-old Hartley Kemp, who is chairman of the school's council and chatted about homework. 84 03 31 p8

1984 06 13

A move to combine the parishes of Histon and Impington has been rejected by the Environment Secretary. Other moves to move Comberton Village College from Thriplow parish, to move Little Thriplow into Fowlmere and change boundaries between Over/Swavesey have also been turned down. But a small piece of farmland on the Little Abington and Babraham border has been agreed. 84 06 13

1984 07 02

Children at Hoker's Pre-Preparatory School in Comberton are being given an early introduction to the computer age. They are being taught the whole range of computer skills from the age of four to help them deal with the demands of the next century. Ann Hoker, the principal says "Small children are not inhibited on a computer – they are going to be the first adults of the 21st century and computers will be to them what ballpoints are to us". 84 07 02

1985 05 09

Every parish in south Cambridgeshire could have its own nature reserve. A start has been made with the church at East Hatley which is kept locked though nesting boxes for birds and bats have been installed and damaged windows allow entry to many winged colonisers. Outside the graveyard has a wide range of chalkland flowers and its rich with butterflies. Other sites include Caxton stone pit, Litlington chalk pit and the former sewage works at Comberton now known as Watts' Wood. None

has plants or wildlife of great rarity but they are oases in the desert of arable farming and the last surviving habitats for animals which were once very common. 85 05 09b

1987 02 10

At Comberton Village College classes now start at 8.30am and the lunch-break has been cut to 40 minutes. But when the school day comes to an end at 2.50pm many children opt to stay behind, having enrolled on one of the 16 different activities such as badminton, drama electronics or Frisbee coaching. None of the pupils actually like jumping out of bed earlier in the morning but prefer the new scheme as it gives them time to pursue new hobbies. Some mothers are concerned about their children getting tired but like not having to ferry them to after-school activities elsewhere 87 02 10 & a

1987 05 05

Comberton may expand under controversial new plans. Developers Alfred McAlpine Homes want to build 215 houses and an employment centre on a 40-acre site to meet the growing demand for housing. It would safeguard the Village College and speed the connection of gas. The village is not earmarked for development in the county structure plans and there is no support for the scheme by residents. But with the recent rejection of plans for Clay Farm Trumpington there is pressure for extra housing in nearby settlements 87 05 05

1990 09 06

Comberton sports pavilion set on fire – 90 09 06a